

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

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27th March 1980

Dear John,

Many thanks for your kind letter of 18th March. I am glad you enjoyed your visit and can assure you that it was as much appreciated by all of us here. I was in Nairobi last week and our Unit there also looks forward to a sight of you before too long.

As regards the idea that we might in certain circumstances act as a sort of contractor for FBIS, two specific instances come to mind. One is that if the scheme for a remote monitoring system from Islamabad comes to fruition then we might do the actual monitoring rather than you set up a new monitoring unit here. I think it might well be more economical in space if the operation were to be integrated with our existing operations and it would almost certainly be cheaper. I have, I must say, considerable reservations about your establishing a radio monitoring unit at Caversham because I fear that your rates of pay would inevitably exceed ours and this would create difficulties for us with our own staff.

Similar considerations would apply in the second instance - coverage of West European Television. As you know, we are due to carry out a survey on your behalf in October and November this year. If that shows that some permanent coverage would be worthwhile, then again we might do it for you as an integral part of our radio coverage of Western Europe.

I would, of course, much prefer to do this work as an extension of our contribution to the partnership, but it seems highly unlikely that I can persuade our paymasters to increase our budget to accommodate it: they won't even pay for our extra effort on Iran and Afghanistan! Nor am I entirely sure that our taking money from FBIS might not endanger the whole relationship which has hitherto been untainted by mercenary considerations of this kind. It needs rather careful thought from both of us, but at least it's an option to be weighed.

Thank you for warning [redacted] of my impending descent upon them. I'll probably go over early in May by which time [redacted] should have some grasp of what he is up to. I hope I get as warm a reception as you did!

All best wishes,

John Rae
Head of Monitoring Service

[redacted]
Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service,
Washington, D.C. 20013.

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